



Ode to Woolworths

Poetry

by Donnalyn Xu

After seeing the psychologist, I visit
 my local grocery store. I leave one hour of trauma
 behind aisles of chip packets & air. Enveloped
 by artificial lights, its cruel brightness
 is a vision of unprecedented beauty—still life
 with rotting mangoes & the soft hum
 of our small & human lives. I am sorting
 through grapefruits, feeling anonymous
 while Whitney Houston plays overhead.
 I stand here for longer than I need to,
 listening to ‘I Wanna Dance with Somebody’
 beside wild colours of citrus. Anthony says
 time doesn’t exist in supermarkets anyway—
 he used to work at Aldi & doesn’t miss
 the lack of windows, sitting in a swivel chair
 scanning muesli bars, the monotonous
beep

beep

beep

beep

but I’m more romantic. Maybe it’s the pulse
 of suburban nostalgia, in which everything
 makes you weepy, like walking to the aisle
 vaguely named *Asian* & seeing images of childhood
 overpriced & carefully curated, a bricolage
 of culture. Maybe it’s a heart monitor
 tracking the veins of this city, this Tuesday
 afternoon, the baby crying in its pram
 like I am crying by the instant curry.
 Maybe it’s just white noise. The synth beat
 of a Whitney song. The exhale that says,
 I’m here, it’s fine, everything goes.

Scan the **QR code** on the right to see an
 animated version of the illustration for this piece.



Donnalyn Xu (21) is a Filipino-Chinese writer, poet, and sometimes-artist from Sydney. She is a Libra sun/moon/venus, which means that everything she writes is a love poem in some way.